



# Indiana State Department of Health

## Epidemiology Resource Center

### Quick Facts

#### About Lyme Disease

##### What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease, or Lyme borreliosis, is a bacterial infection caused by bacterium known as *Borrelia burgdorferi*.

##### How is Lyme disease spread?

The bacterium normally lives in mice, squirrels and other small animals. It is transmitted among these animals – and to humans – through the bites of certain species of ticks that are infected with *Borrelia* bacteria. In the northeastern and north-central United States, the black-legged tick (or deer tick), *Ixodes scapularis*, transmits Lyme disease. Young ticks can be as small as a pinhead, and the adults are only slightly larger.

##### Who is at risk for Lyme disease?

People who live, travel, or work in areas that may be infested with ticks.

##### What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

About 80% of the people treated for Lyme disease have a skin rash that appears within 3-32 days after the bite of an infected tick. The rash begins as a small red

area at the site of the bite that gradually enlarges, leaving a clear center with a swollen outer ring (bull's eye rash). Flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, muscle and joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, and stiff neck may accompany the rash. If left untreated, Lyme disease may lead to joint, heart and nervous system problems.

### **How do I know if I have Lyme disease?**

See your health care provider. Be sure to inform your health care provider if you have been bitten by a tick or have been exposed to tick-infested areas.

### **How is Lyme disease treated?**

Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. Symptoms of Lyme disease may continue or recur even after appropriate treatment.

### **How Lyme disease is prevented?**

Preventing the attachment and feeding of ticks through personal protection measures can prevent Lyme disease.

- Wear light-colored long pants with cuffs tucked into socks and long sleeves when walking in grassy or wooded areas. It is easier to spot ticks on light-colored clothing.
- Put insect repellent containing DEET on clothing, socks, and shoes and exposed skin. Permethrin (Permanone) will keep ticks off clothes and shoes but should not be applied directly to skin.
- Check every 2 hours for ticks on clothes or exposed skin.
- After returning from the grassy or wooded area, brush off clothing and body. Inspect clothes and body for ticks, particularly in the areas of the groin, back of neck and knees, and armpits. Take a hot shower and wash clothing at a high temperature.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/index.htm>